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SPANISH INTERESTS IN MOROCCO

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Since the Middle Ages Spain has been continuously established within the boundaries of Morocco, and at the present time Spain is the only foreign power possessing a foothold on Moroccan soil. The three island presidios, Penon de Velez de Gomera, the Alhucemas, and the Zaffarines, lying off the coast, and the two cities, Melilla and Ceuta, clinging with desperation to the mainland, comprise the Spanish possessions.

Ceuta is by far the most important of these possessions. The fortress is built on a headland extending into the sea toward the east. On the west only, can it be approached by land. As at Melilla, a strip of neutral territory separates the walls of the city from what may be called by courtesy, Makhzen territory, although actually Ceuta, like Melilla, is shut in on the land side by the independent tribes of the mountains. Ceuta has a population of about 14,000, its commerce is unimportant as yet, but there are possibilities of very considerable increase. From Tangier, thirty miles to the west, and from Tetuan, about twenty-five miles to the south, the roads are difficult and dangerous, and there is little communication. Ceuta is kept in touch with Spain by a boat service which makes the trip to Algeciras and return each day. It is a typical Spanish town and there is little in its streets or its buildings to suggest that it lies on the south side of the strait. To enter the city one must have a passport, or papers of identification and a special permit must be obtained from the governor, if one wishes to remain more than twenty-four hours.

One hundred and thirty-five miles to the east of Ceuta is Melilla. In 1908 it consisted of a gloomy prison-fortress and a discouraged, dismal, civil quarter, with a population of per-

haps six or seven thousand. Melilla is a natural market and shipping port for goods from the south by way of Tafilelt and Oudjda, but the French railway line (to Colomb Bechar) is within easy reach of the caravan route and has taken the trade to Oran. In the neutral zone just outside the gate of Melilla is a Moroccan customs house, which is maintained by agreement with the Spanish authorities. The mutual hatred of the Moroccans and the Spanish has greatly interfered with the development of trade both at Ceuta and at Melilla. Of all the European powers the Spanish are the most hated by the Moroccans. For ages it has been the special diversion of the Rifains to pick off, from the hills about the city, any Spaniard who strayed outside the walls.

About 1885 Melilla was enjoying a period of considerable prosperity. The Spanish governor was far-sighted and conciliatory in his attitude toward the neighboring tribes, and earnest in his endeavors to build up the commerce of the port. The population of Melilla was growing rapidly and the city had a good prospect of becoming an important trade center. In the nineties things were not looking as well and they grew worse. The loss of trade to France and the renewal of troubles with the natives brought on a period of stagnation and the civil population drifted away. In 1909 the convicts were removed and Melilla ceased to be one of the presidios. This will make the city a more desirable place of residence and will attract a better class of colonists. Under the direction of a competent governor Melilla may again look forward to better times.

The three presidios, Penon de Velez de Gomera, the Alhucemas, and the Zaffarines, are little more than prison settlements. Their only connection with the world is by a weekly boat from Melilla which must keep them supplied with water as well as food.

Penon de Velez is situated in the bay of Badis, eighty miles west of Melilla at the mouth of the Oued Talambadis. Formerly there was a Spanish settlement on the mainland opposite the island, but that is now a ruin. There is a settlement of about five hundred inhabitants, many of them ex-convicts, besides a

garrison of perhaps four hundred soldiers and nearly as many prisoners.

Twenty-seven miles east of Penon de Velez, in the bay of Nekour, is the presidio of Alhucemas. The conditions here are practically the same as at Penon de Velez de Gomera except that the whole population, civilians, soldiers and convicts, does not number five hundred.

Twenty-seven miles east of Melilla, opposite the mouth of the Oued Moulouia, are the three Zaffarine islands. The convict settlement is on the middle and largest island, the island of Isabelle II. The coast here is very dangerous and a lighthouse is maintained on this island. These islands were occupied by Spain in June, 1848, only just before a French expedition arrived for the same purpose. Conditions of life at the Zaffarines are as miserable as at the other islands. Nevertheless, the islands have a real value. There is good anchorage and an army could easily be landed at the mouth of the Oued Moulouia. It seems likely that eventually the Oued Moulouia will form the boundary between the French and Spanish spheres of influence in northern Morocco, and in that case the Zaffarine islands would have a decided strategic importance. On the coast opposite the islands are the Kebdana and Trifa tribes which occupy the land between the eastern extremity of the Rif proper and Algeria. They are berber tribes arabised from constant contact with the nomad Arabs from the south. They belong to the Angad group. Both tribes are extremely hostile to the Spanish. The Kebdana have a settlement opposite the islands and their principal occupation is preventing the Spaniards from landing. The Trifa have a town called Bordj Saidia on the edge of the sea just west of the Algerian frontier, where is the residence of the Kaid having jurisdiction over several of these tribes.

Spain has also another concession of land in Morocco, but the concession seems to have been a jest on the part of the Makhzen at the expense of Spain. Somewhere on the southwestern coast of Spain in, or near, the province of Es-Sous, Spain had, at one time, held a fishing station known as Santa Cruz de Mar Pequena, but the village has been destroyed and the site lost.

At the close of the war of 1860 between Spain and Morocco, Morocco agreed to cede to Spain this same fishing station, but as the Spanish themselves have never been able to locate the place, and as Morocco has steadfastly declined to cede another location in place of it, Spain is still hunting for its lost Santa Cruz de Mar Pequena.

Spain holds also the province of Rio del Ora, which is outside the limits of Morocco, but must be considered in this connection. Rio del Ora extends on the Atlantic from Cape Blanco to the southern limit of Morocco, south of Cape Juby. This territory is of no great value in itself, and the important oases to the east of it are all held by France. Nevertheless, the possession of Rio del Ora is likely to secure to Spain, in any final settlement of the Moroccan question, the control of the Oued Nun and of Moroccan territory north as far as the province of Es-Sous. This would be logical as the mountains to the south of Es-Sous form a natural boundary. How great would be the economic value of the province of the Oued Nun is problematical, but at any rate it would be worth something to Spain and almost nothing to France.

We hear much of the historic rights of Spain in Morocco, but these may safely be disregarded, as not even Spanish statesmen take them seriously. The Spanish claims for special consideration rest on something more substantial than such a shadowy basis. The possession of actual colonies in Morocco, the proximity of Morocco to the Spanish coast and the fact that the European population of Morocco is principally Spanish (there are five thousand Spanish in Tangier alone; and six thousand more in the other open ports, besides twenty or twenty-five thousand in the colonies), gives to Spain rights which cannot be gainsaid. With a Spanish city at Ceuta and another at Melilla Spain could hardly be expected to acquiesce in the control of the Rif passing to another European power.

The loss of her colonies was a severe blow to Spanish pride and prestige, but that very loss has made it possible for the new Spain, of these later years, to turn her attention and devote surplus energy to colonial enterprises nearer home which prom-

ise greater returns politically and economically. The Spanish government has seen in Morocco a neglected opportunity and they are endeavoring, somewhat late in the day, to secure, if not a dominant position, at least one commensurate with Spanish interests and with the privileged position which Spain occupies. Spain must go forward with the Moroccan adventure. The result of the war with the United States only made this more plain. In 1899 the *Epoca* said: "It is necessary to insist upon this fact that there is an immense difference between our colonies in Oceanica and our possessions in Africa. If, in the case of the former, our mission may be considered as ended with the loss of the Philippines, the mission of Spain in Africa is not ended and cannot be ended, although our present weakness makes it necessary for us to pause to reorganize and to concentrate our strength."

At this time it was England that was causing Spain the most anxiety in Morocco. When in 1900 it was reported that active intervention in Morocco on the part of England had only been prevented by a statement of Ribot, the French premier, to Lord Salisbury, that if a British soldier was landed in Morocco a French army corps would cross the frontier, the report was readily believed and caused considerable excitement. Even the highly improbable story that England was to acquire from Spain the elusive concession of Santa Cruz de Mar Pequena, was the subject of explicit denial by the premier, Silvela, in the Cortes. To Spain, as to France, it looked very much as though England was like the dog in the manger. It was not probable that England had any idea of a future conquest of the country. The chief aim of England was to prevent the fortification of the heights opposite Gibraltar by another power and the surest way to prevent this seemed to be by keeping the other powers out. In 1902, when England was manœuvring to hold, and France to gain the ascendancy in Morocco, Julian Ribero, in an interesting summary of the situation, pointed out that Spain could not longer remain in the background if she wished to have a hand in the final settlement of the Moroccan question. According to Ribero the question was whether Spain should come to terms

with England or with France, and he decided that Spanish interests lay with France. His views are the more interesting because Silvela, at that time at the head of the government, expressed opinions strongly in favor of joint action with France.

Ribero said: "The friendship of that nation (France) is most useful to us at home and abroad. The question of Morocco cannot be settled without her assent. Even if by a fortunate chance the conquest proved easy, no one could conquer or hold the country without the friendship of France, who holds in her hands the Moroccan frontier on the side of Algiers, natural base of operations, offensive and defensive, a source of moral influence of great force."

The following statement of Ribero is so much to the point and has so much bearing on the French case, as well as on that of Spain, that I quote it in its entirety:

"At the present time in all that concerns the question of Morocco, the enormous inferiority of our resources, compared with those of France, place us under the obligation of submitting entirely to her, in order to obtain a lasting success. One must not forget that the qualities necessary for becoming master of a country by force are very different from those which are necessary for holding it in time of peace, and of organizing the possession; if one has not these last it is not worth while to undertake a war of conquest. Even if we were successful in our military operations, we would find ourselves at the end under the necessity of having recourse to the assistance of France which would place us in the position of living at her mercy. France would bring to us the Jewish synagogues, which she protects now with friendliness: we have an aversion because of our character and of our traditions, for such friendship, however useful in such a case. France would bring also with her the Shereef of Ouazzan and other powerful families who, upon her sole recommendation, would become our friends: we have completely neglected the friendship of the Moors, or rather, we have not known how to gain it, whatever those may say who pride themselves with having intimate relations with the great dignitaries of that empire. France would bring also the mussulmans of Algeria, those who

know well the law and the customs of Morocco, they having studied at the University of Fez: we know neither the law nor the customs of the country. Last of all the French, by their character and their education which results from their liberal institutions and from their commerce with the Algerians, know how to be very tolerant with the Moors, while we Spanish would never know how we ought to treat them. Under these conditions, to what ought we to commit ourselves? It follows from all this that, if the conflict was to come at once, it would be better to withdraw. We have been unable to hold together a colonial empire where the Spanish race was dominant: we have brought about by our imprudence the loss of our colonies and by our rashness a disastrous foreign war. How, then, should we hurl ourselves alone in quest of adventures against a people strong and unconquered, in view of the feelings which our actions would arouse in the greater part of the European powers. Ought we then to renounce all this? That is another matter. The status quo, like the conquest, demands on our part, long preparation. In either case the same conditions are necessary. It is this thought that should be the object of our constant pre-occupation."

Since 1902 Spain has increased in wealth at home and in dignity abroad. Alphonso XIII is young in years but he has an old head. He has shown statesmanlike qualities which were not expected and which have won the respect of diplomatic circles. He is the hardest working man in Spain, and he is making his work count. It is only just to say that he, and not his ministers, is directing the policy of Spain at home and abroad. That he is ambitious, goes without saying, but it is the ambition of a patriot who is working for the welfare of his people. Morocco is the natural field for Spanish colonial activity and expansion and it is not likely that Spain will overlook any opportunity to get all that is possible out of Morocco. In the final settlement with France the minister of Alphonso XIII may be expected to play his cards well.

Before 1904 the Liberal leaders in Spain were inclined to be opposed to joint action with France in Morocco, while the Con-

servative leaders generally favored it. The Conservative Silvela, who was president of the council for the last time in 1902, believed that Spain must work with France, and his political successor, Maura, who was at the head of the cabinet in 1904 and again from January, 1907, to October, 1909, was strongly of this opinion. The Franco-Spanish accord of October 6, 1904, was negotiated with the Maura (Conservative) cabinet, while at the conference at Algeciras, which was the outcome of the Franco-Spanish accords, the Moret ministry (Liberal) unobtrusively but steadfastly supported France against Germany on every test vote.

The Franco-Spanish accord was not received in 1904 with great acclaim in Spain outside of conservative circles. It was felt that the future of Spain in Morocco had been largely sacrificed under pressure from England and France. By 1906 sentiment had considerably changed and there was a general belief that the secret clauses of the 1904 accord amply guaranteed Spain. As a Spanish statesman recently said in the Cortes, in connection with events about Melilla, the views expressed in irresponsible newspapers cannot be accepted as representing the policy of the government or the opinion of the people. In view of the wild attacks on France and England, in some of the Spanish papers, it should be noted that on the eve of the conference of Algeciras, the foreign policy of the leaders of the two chief parties in the Cortes was very much in agreement.

The *Heraldo*, the official organ of the Liberal party, at that time in power, published an article over the signature of Adolfo Galzado in which he said:—"Spanish opinion ought to be unanimous without reservations. In upholding France she defends her own interests, guaranteed by the convention of October 6, 1904. It is not a secret from anyone that that convention respected and recognized our historic rights.

"From another side, anarchy in Morocco constitutes a permanent peril for us. It was natural that France, a mussulman nation in Africa, because she has in Algeria six millions of mussulman subjects, was obliged to defend her very extensive frontier so as not to lose the millions involved in the Moroccan debt and in commerce.

"From whichever side we look at it our heart is with France; and in the present case, our head also is with France and England."

I quote the following passages from the *Epoca* of January 10, 1906, six days before the conference opened: . . . "We ought to work in union with England and France to make effective these indisputable agreements; and if, through the attitude of nations who have only slight interests and almost no claims in Morocco we should not succeed, we ought to endeavor firmly to maintain the status quo and to prevent the realization, to our disadvantage of the projects of the inter-nationalization of Morocco, cherished by certain Powers." . . . "in the diplomatic quarrel which is going forward between the two giants, England and Germany, for the world supremacy, we cannot, or rather, we ought not to remain indifferent. Spain might have some doubt if it were a question of deciding between France and England in this dispute, but Providence, which consents from time to time to have pity on the Spaniards, has arranged that these two nations should be united today by firm ties, that neither the fall of Delcasse nor that of Lansdowne, were able to break or loosen. It is with them that Spain ought to unite, not in search of ill-considered adventures either African or European, but simply for the defense of her incontestable rights and of her natural frontiers. Rarely has Fortune knocked so loudly at our doors and it would be a criminal clumsiness not to let her enter our house except by some crack in the wall."

There is no reason to doubt that there were certain secret clauses in the Franco-Spanish convention of October 6, 1904. But we can only infer what was covered by those clauses.

In the number of the *Wiener Allgemeine Zeitung* of July 30, 1910, there was published what purported to be the substance of these clauses. As given by the *Zeitung* these articles are as follows:

"*Article I.* France and Spain mutually guarantee their possessions in North Africa.

"*Article II.* France and Spain are in agreement in limiting their economic interests in Morocco and at Fez.

"*Article III.* In case the Spanish military forces are not able

to defend their possessions, comprised between the frontier about Ceuta and that about Melilla, France agrees to lend to Spain armed assistance.

"*Article IV.* If Spain should desire to cede, sell or lease, partially or totally, her possessions in Morocco to any other power or to Morocco, she agrees not to do so without the express sanction of France."

It is hardly probable that this statement is either wholly accurate or complete. It is quoted for what it is worth. Whatever the actual terms of the convention are, both the French and Spanish governments seem equally satisfied and equally confident that their respective rights have been protected.

It is true that the occupation of Oudjda by the French in March, 1907, was generally denounced by the Spanish press, including the liberal papers, although the *Epoca*, the Conservative organ, declared it justified. It is true also that the Maura government, from that time until the French landing at Casa blanca, in the August following, held aloof from joint action with France and did not at once join with France in preserving order in the Chaouia province. It is reasonable to suppose that Spain did not like to see French troops on Moroccan soil both in the east and in the west and was fearful of the outcome. It was quite possible that France would in some way gain a permanent advantage through this temporary occupation. Spain soon realized, however, that it was better policy, as well as necessary, to accept the assurance of the French government that France would not in any way exceed the rights and duties placed upon her under the terms of the Algeciras agreement, and to co-operate in subduing the revolting tribes. Since the troubles about Melilla began, Spain has been too much occupied with her own campaign against the Rifains to pay much attention to French activities.

The troubles in the vicinity of Melilla began in July, 1909, when some workmen employed on the railway line which connects Melilla with the mines of Beni-Bou-Ifrou, about thirteen miles in the interior, were killed by Rifains of the Guelaya district. General Marnia, in command at Melilla, at once took

the field to punish the aggressors, but the disturbance grew rapidly and involved practically all the tribes in that part of the Rif, as well as the Kebdana tribes to the east.

Early in 1910 Spain had 50,000 troops operating in the neighborhood of Melilla. France took alarm and it required the most constant and positive assurances of the French cabinet and the most emphatic statements from the Spanish government, that Spain was not contemplating a war of conquest, to restore confidence in France. It was repeatedly asserted in the press that Spanish troops would move upon Taza and wrest from France the key to Fez and all northern Morocco. Even General d'Amade, who had just returned after a brilliant campaign in the Chaouia, so far forgot his position as to express opinions for which he was disciplined by the government. In an interview, published in the *Matin* of October 7, 1907, the general was quoted as follows: . . . "Look at the map: you will find a route which from our Oran frontier goes from Oudjda to Rabat by Taza and Fez. That route is accessible and will be known before long, by all travelers interested in the penetration of Morocco, as the natural road which it is of the first importance to secure. On that road Taza is the all-important point. And I add: If we do not take care, Taza may prove to be the Moroccan Fashoda. . . . Have the Spanish sent all these troops to Morocco for police duty about Melilla? I do not think so. Rather, I think that the first successes have produced in Spain an awakening of the military party and that the idea of conquest has seized upon their adventurous spirits. The King himself is personally interested in Morocco: he has been, some months ago, to Melilla to review the troops, and he has never concealed his wish to find in Morocco some compensation for the loss of the colonial empire of Spain. . . . In truth we ought to intervene with the least possible delay, if we wish to safeguard our interests, economic and political, in Africa."

In reply to questions regarding this remarkable statement of General d'Amade, M. Pichon, Minister of Foreign Affairs, gave an important interview to the press in which he said: . . . "Our rights are determined, very exactly, by treaty,

and especially by the accords Franco-Spanish of 1904 and 1905; these definitely assure to our sphere of influence a free access to the Atlantic. It is that question precisely which has provoked, it seems, absolutely unjustifiable alarms. Spain will not go to Taza, for we have no reason to think that, contrary to her declarations, she nourishes projects of conquest the realization of which would meet with grave opposition in the interior as well as exterior."

The Marquis de Segonzac, who knows the Rif country better than any other European, and is indeed the only European who has traveled very extensively through it, gave this very interesting contribution to the discussion: "The Spanish will not go to Taza, because the route to Fez for the Spanish would be more direct from Badis, a village opposite Penon de Velez. It is a direct and easy road and was formerly used by the Genoise in preference to the route from Tangier: and also because the route from Melilla to Taza would necessitate long and desperate fighting."

The Melilla campaign was brought to a successful conclusion and resulted in increasing the prestige of Spain in Morocco generally, and especially in the Rif. The episode was closed, for the time being, when, on November 16, 1910, Mohammed el Mokri signed at Madrid the convention between Spain and Morocco. Under the terms of this convention the authority of Spain was considerably increased in the parts of the Rif bordering on the Spanish possessions. The convention provided for the organization of a body of native police, instructed by Spanish officers and the withdrawal of the Spanish troops when the native police should be competent to insure tranquility and security. Morocco agreed to pay a heavy indemnity to Spain to cover actual damage, the cost of military operations, and the expense which Spain had incurred in removing, at the request of the Makhzen, a body of Moroccan troops from the vicinity of Melilla to Tangier, after their defeat by the Rogui, some time previous. Certain public works undertaken by Spain were to become the exclusive property of the Makhzen. The convention also provided for a special commission to settle the question of the fisheries.

Spain is taking a leaf from the French book on pacific penetration and is planning to increase the number of its schools, hospitals and dispensaries in Morocco. In 1908 there were thirteen Spanish schools, eleven of them under the control of the church. There are about eighty pupils in the two schools, one at Tangier and the other at El Ksar, established independently of the church. In the eleven schools of the church located at Tangier, Tituan, Larache, Rabat, Casa blanca, Mazagan, and Mogador, there are over eight hundred pupils,—nearly half are girls. In the summer of 1910 plans were completed and the contracts signed for a new school to be opened at Tangier under the patronage of the king, who is greatly interested in the project. A fund of sixty thousand dollars has been provided and it is the intention to make it a model of its kind.

The Spanish press in Morocco has done more to hurt than to help Spanish influence. There are indications now that the Spanish papers are learning that their mission is to assist in overcoming opposition to Spain, not to excite it. The daily *El Porvenir*, published at Tangier, is planning to print some of its articles in Arabic. The *Marruecos*, published bi-monthly at Tangier, is devoted to political and geographical articles. At Ceuta, *El Defensor de Ceuta* appears once a week, and several other papers appear at irregular intervals. At Melilla there are the *Telegrama del Rif*, a daily, and *El Eco Rifeno* which is published three times a week.

Alphonso XIII appreciates the necessity of overcoming the aversion to Spain and of winning the confidence and the respect of the natives. It is unfortunate that the official representatives of Spain in Morocco have not, generally, been worthy of their positions, and that the Spanish settled in the country, have made themselves so generally obnoxious. These things can be remedied and his intention is to have them remedied.

If, as is probable, Spain sometime obtains control of northern Morocco east as far as the Moulouia and south as far as (but not controlling) the route from Oudjda to Fez, she will secure a territory of very considerable known, and greater prospective value. It is a prize well worth having, aside from its strategic importance.